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# An SAB Synopsis

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*A Summary of a Just-Released SAB Report*

March 16, 1999

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## **Review of the FY2000 Presidential Science and Technology Budget Request for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

EPA-SAB-RSAC-99-012

In completing a review of the USEPA's (Agency's) science budget request for FY 2000, the Science Advisory Board (SAB) applauded the Agency's continued progress in developing a goal-based budget for science. The Board found the budget request to be closely linked to the Agency's Strategic Plan, in general, and to the Strategic Plan of the Office of Research and Development (ORD), in particular.

At the same time, however, the Board expressed concern about the adequacy of the Agency's proposed budget to address all of its scientific research needs. In their view, the research budget may not be sufficient in several areas (i.e., tropospheric ozone, endocrine disruptors, waste site remediation technologies, microbial pathogens and indoor air) to generate the scientific and technological information needed to meet the goals established in the Strategic Plans. The Board recognizes that there are constraints on any budget but urged that the Agency be more open in explaining the difficult choices that have to be made.

In its report, the Board urges that future science budgets be developed using a prioritized list of research needs. The budget request should clearly show what research needs are being addressed and which ones are not, together with an explanation of the choices made.

The Board was encouraged by the internal cooperation among the various Agency offices. Coordinated by the Chief Financial Officer and ORD's Office of Science Policy, the Agency laid out a much larger collection of scientific activities than in previous years. The data revealed that the whole of EPA is

indeed a science agency, in that ORD conducts only about half of the scientific work done by the Agency.

The SAB report resulted from the work of the SAB's Research Strategies Advisory Committee (RSAC), under the chairmanship of Dr. W. Randall Seeker of Energy & Environment Research Corporation in Irvine, CA. Dr. Seeker said, "Having looked at EPA science budgets for more than half a decade, I am particularly encouraged by the progress that we have seen over the past two years." Dr. Joan Daisey of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Chair of the SAB Executive Committee that approved the RSAC report in a public meeting on March 8, noted that "This year's presentation of the budget was much more forthcoming in displaying the extent of scientific activity throughout the Agency. We urge the Agency to take additional steps in presenting a comprehensive, coordinated picture of scientific efforts in future budgets. We believe that things are moving in the right direction."

Dr. Seeker will provide testimony on the SAB's report at a hearing of the Energy and Environment Subcommittee of the House Science Committee on March 18.

A complete copy of this report from the SAB's RSAC is available on the SAB Website (<http://www.epa.gov/SAB>), by request from the SAB office through Email to [thomas.patricia@epa.gov], or by Fax at [202-260-1889].

The SAB is a body of independent scientists established by Congress in 1978 to examine the technical underpinnings of EPA positions.